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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how Japanese teachers of English can help students acquire real oral communication skills by challenging and changing their teaching approaches, reflecting on their teaching styles, understanding the situation in their language classrooms, and taking steps to solve the problem of authentic oral communication. The paper explores how secondary level Japanese English teachers can help students learn real oral communication skills effectively by optimizing language learning conditions. Four sections focus on: (1) "Reflections on the Situation and Problems in My Class"; (2) "Optimum Language Learning Conditions" (exposure, use of language, motivation, and instruction); (3) "Solution: Task-Based Learning" (defining a task, how the task-based learning framework operates, how task-based learning optimizes four language learning conditions, a variety of task types provides rich opportunities and experiences, and acquiring communication strategies); and (4) "Conclusion" (teachers must help students improve not only accuracy but also true communicative abilities). A lesson plan, "Focus on Oral Communication," is appended. (Contains 17 references.) (SM)

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Challenge and Change

for EFL Oral Communication Instruction

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Introduction

How can teachers of English improve student oral communication skills in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting? To date, Japanese teachers of English have made great efforts to encourage students to speak in their English classes. Games and other oral activities have allowed students to learn language form and function. However, students are still not able to communicate orally in English during spontaneous face-to-face interactions.

How can we English teachers change this situation in order to help students acquire real oral communication skills? Now, it is time to challenge and change our teaching approaches. English teachers need to reflect on their teaching style, understand the situation in their language classrooms, and take steps to solve the problems. It is essential for English teachers to understand optimum language learning conditions and to find and carry out a methodology that enables these conditions to flourish in their English classrooms.

This paper will explore and suggest how Japanese teachers of English in senior high schools can help students to learn real oral communication skills effectively by optimizing language learning conditions. In section ., I will describe the situation in my classroom and focus on the current problems of oral communication teaching. Section . will discuss four conditions of optimum language learning and their effect on language acquisition. In section ., I will define a "task" and how Task-Based Learning (TBL) works. Additionally, I will explain how the TBL framework optimizes the four language learning conditions. Next, I will introduce six types of tasks that can be used in the language classroom, and finally, I will discuss the effectiveness of communication strategies and how to adapt them to the TBL framework.

Section I: Reflections on the Situation and Problems in My Class

A. Situation

In order to explain the situation in my classroom, I will describe four types of oral activities that I frequently use. The first activity is "free conversation". At the beginning of class, I begin by asking a student about a topic related to his or her everyday life; for example, "How did you spend last weekend?" or "What are your favorite sports?" Sometimes, I have students ask other classmates the same question or I ask the question of several other students. The second activity is a display question, i.e. not a genuine question because the answer is already known. I pose display questions, focusing on the content of the text, new vocabulary, and grammar structures, e.g. past tense. The following is a typical dialogue:

Teacher (me): "What did he buy at the shop?"

Student A: "CD player."

Teacher (me): "He what?"

Student A: "He buy CD player."

Teacher (me): "He buy?"

Students A: "No, he BOUGHT CD player."

Teacher (me): "Yes, he bought a CD player".

Students respond to the display questions, which are not authentic, by looking for the answers in their textbook. Also, students create their own display questions and ask and answer each other in pairs or groups. The third oral activity I use with some regularity is the choral drill. I have students repeat again and again after I read a text aloud. Next, students practice reading aloud the same text, but in pairs. I use other varieties of reading-aloud for additional practice. Finally, oral translation, the fourth activity, is used after instruction of several targeted

language forms. The teacher provides Japanese sentences and the students translate them into English, memorize them, and report the translations to other group members. I also use translation games and activities to improve their speaking skills.

However, all the activities described above, except for the "free conversation", have no real impact on the development of student oral communication skills. Students experience no communicative interaction:

- The teacher's questions require them to answer with information from the text, not with their own language;
- The choral reading is in reality a reading activity and pronunciation practice;
- The translation games and activities reinforce Japanese language structures.

Why does my English class limit opportunities for real oral communication practice? I would like to propose three reasons. First, my experience and knowledge related to helping students acquire oral communication skills are limited. Until recently, I had no background or training in teaching oral communication skills. Therefore, I could not understand why my students continued to have difficulty speaking English fluently despite my best efforts. Actually, many Japanese teachers of English have had no formal training in communicative approaches.

Second, language textbooks are limited, that is, they do not provide sufficient materials for communicative activities. Teachers would have to develop supplementary materials to make up for inappropriate and incomplete texts. Unfortunately, as is often the case with me, teachers do not prepare such materials, so students practice with only text-based vocabulary and target expressions

thereby limiting language production. Thus, the lack of communicative activities in the textbooks restricts student learning. Finally, the way in which I assess oral communication has an effect on the development of oral skills. I tape-record students speaking in class and evaluate the tapes after school. The process consists mainly of picture response and comprehension from a listening dialogue. In the former test, students describe the content of a picture and make up the words a character in the picture might say. The latter test requires them to answer questions about a listening passage. I evaluate their oral communication using the following assessment criteria: (1) how accurately they can answer and (2) how often they use target structures they previously learned in class. However, these tests assess only one-way speech and listening comprehension skills, not their interactive communication skills. Thus, their fluency and communication strategies are not taken into account for the assessment. As a consequence, there are real limits to their oral communication development.

B. Problematic Results

As a result of the classroom teaching described above, two problem areas emerge. One problematic result is that students lack opportunity and experience in "real" oral communication. According to Savignon (2001), real oral communication requires skills and strategies to convey the intention and understand the message of interlocutors in an authentic communication setting. Since these conditions are lacking, students are not able to speak English fluently and, moreover, they can not solve or deal with problems during face-to-face interaction; as a result, they avoid such interaction. This problem can be observed when the ALT (Assistant Language Teacher) talks to the students. Their responses are only a few halting words or they

remain silent with a bitter smile. They do not seem to know how to use the language they study in class.

The other problematic area is too much teacher control in class. How does this influence student development of oral communication skills? Usually, I control my class by doing most of the speaking and directing all the language production. Students just follow my direction without understanding the purpose of the activity or initiating any language of their own. This cycle makes them passive learners: they are always waiting for my direction, even if they have questions. They are also unmotivated learners because they have no choices and can not feel responsible for their own learning. Also, a teacher-centered class makes students afraid of mistakes and diminishes risk-taking on their part. They do not want to feel embarrassed in front of other classmates when their mistakes are corrected by the teacher. They become too concerned about accuracy in language learning. These problems prevent students from acquiring real oral communication skills.

In the next section, I will present several solutions to challenge and change my oral communication teaching practice.

Section II: Optimum Language Learning Conditions

This section will explore the optimum conditions for language learning as background for the proposed solution (Section Ⅲ). Researchers in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) argue that optimum language learning conditions are necessary for children to acquire language. In particular, Jane Willis (1996b) maintains that three conditions must be met and one condition is desirable. (see Fig.1)

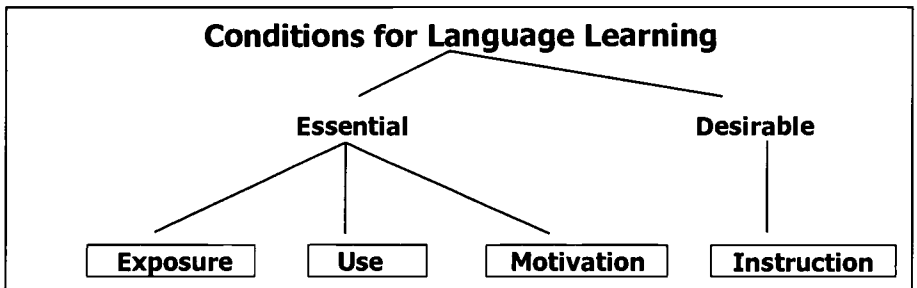


Fig.1 Conditions for Language Learning. [from Jane Willis. 1996. A Framework for Task-Based Learning. p.11]

A. Exposure

Willis (1996a) defines exposure, the first of these essential conditions, as follows: "Exposure" provides "a rich but comprehensible input of real language, i.e. the kind of language that learners will be needing or wishing to understand and use themselves" (p. 59). Additionally, Willis (1996b) maintains that exposure is both a conscious and subconscious process for language learners. They try to understand whatever language they hear and read. Also, they observe other speakers and notice various ways of expressing meaning. Larsen-Freeman (2000) adds, "By interacting with others, they (learners) get to listen to language which may be beyond their present ability, but which may be assimilated into their knowledge of the target language for use at a later time" (p. 144). Willis (1996b) concurs by

writing that learners begin to internalize new language features in their language system only after they notice, process, and understand such features. In short, we first need to "experience" new language, and then allow time to synthesize it into our language system before we can express the new language features in our own words.

The teacher's use of English provides another language exposure to students. "Teacher talk is also seen as a valuable source of aural input, provided it is adjusted to the students' levels of comprehension and engages them in purposeful listening" (Byram, 2000, p. 565). Willis (1996b) describes how non-native teachers use English in the classroom as an advantage:

> Teachers commonly modify their speech to suit their learners and help them understand. Repeating, rephrasing, stopping to explain a vital new word are all part of the natural co-operative communication process. Non-native teachers are generally much better at this than native speakers, because they have a greater appreciation of their learners' difficulties (p. 12).

Japanese teachers of English should take advantage of their role and make the best use of their English in the classroom. They can provide valuable opportunities for students to be exposed to as much spoken English as possible.

B. Use of Language

The second essential condition for language learning is "use of language". "Learners need opportunities to communicate what they want to say and express what they feel or think. Using language for real purposes (for example to get things done, share experiences and socialize) gives learners chances to recall and use the language they know already" (Willis, 1996b, p. 13). Willis (1996a) continues, "Learners...experiment and test hypotheses...in a variety of circumstances" (p. 59).

John Dewey, a leading American educator, advocates principles of effective learning through language use experience: one learns best by 'doing' and by active experimentation. Such experiences lead to inductive learning through discovery which activates strategies that help students 'take charge' of their own learning progress (Brown, 2001). Brown (2001) states, "they (students) 'discover' language principles by trial and error, by processing feedback, by building hypotheses, and by revising these assumptions in order to become fluent" (p. 238). To summarize, "language use" provides great opportunities for learners to communicate with their own language for real purposes through experimenting and revising hypotheses.

C. Motivation

"Motivation" is the third condition for optimum language learning. Motivation is viewed as indispensable for successful language learners. It is "motivation to listen and read, i.e. to process the exposure for meaning; and also to use the language, to speak and write" (Willis, 1996a, p. 60). There are two key factors to sustain motivation: the "success cycle" and "less error correction". Success leads to satisfaction and then confidence (refer to Fig. 2). Littlejohn (2001) explains the "success cycle": "Feelings of being able to do something and feelings of sustained motivation can therefore be linked into an upward spiral which causes us to commit ourselves to what are we doing and to improve" (Littlejohn, 2001, Success in the task section, para. 1). Further, she suggests that teachers should choose tasks that are achievable for students and help them to develop a sense of competence and

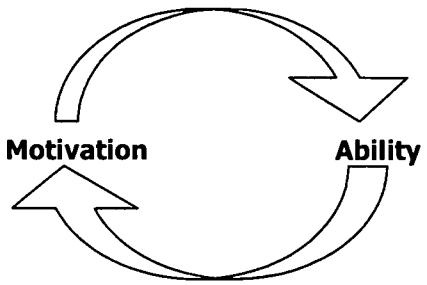


Fig. 2 Success cycle [from Littlejohn, 2001, Motivation: Where does it come from? Where does it go? Success in the task section, para. 1]

confidence by their experiencing a sense of "can". Another key factor of success is "less error correction". Willis (1996b) writes, "To correct more than is absolutely necessary only undermines confidence and reduces motivation, especially when the focus is on trying to communicate" (p. 14). Kamada (1991) suggests that to stimulate greater intrinsic motivation "mistakes must be perceived as beautiful" (p. 27). He further elucidates that mistakes in learning a foreign language are similar to those that children experience when they learn their mother tongue. Kamada (1991) defines mistakes in language learning with an interesting analogy related to the Japanese martial art, Judo. When learning Judo, we must learn how to fall gracefully in order to avoid being hurt. The lesson here is that we, as teachers, must create a comfortable and secure learning environment where students can practice "falling gracefully", i.e. students can willingly practice taking risks without being afraid of mistakes when they use their own language.

D. Instruction

Finally, I will explore "instruction" as a desirable learning condition. Does "desirable" mean "doing without it"? Can students learn without teacher instruction? Peter Skehan (1996) shows surprising evidence, "Second language acquisition (SLA) research has established that teaching does not and can not determine the way the learner's language will develop" (p. 19). He continues that language taught in the classroom does not immediately help students learn it because they follow a "natural" process of language acquisition. What is the "natural" process of language acquisition? Lightbown and Spada (1999) conclude that there is evidence for a developmental sequence or order of acquisition after Roger Brown's research of how children acquired 14 grammatical morphemes, e.g. present progressive *–ing* (Mummy running) and auxiliary '*be*' (He is coming).

Instruction "has a positive effect on the use of some learning strategies" and therefore "clearly improves rate of learning" and "probably improves the ultimate level of SL (second language) attainment" (Long & Crookes, 1992, p. 42). Skehan's (1996) description shares a common element with Long and Crookes: "this effect (of instruction) is indirect and non-immediate", but "instructed learners, that is, make faster progress than uninstructed learners and reach higher levels of ultimate attainment" (p. 19). Willis (1996b) adds, "instruction which focuses on language form can...speed up the rate of language development and raise the ultimate level of the learners' attainment" (p. 15). Willis' statement may seem contradictory to the theory of development sequences, but her premise is the same as Skehan, Long, and Crookes in that instruction "indirectly" influences the rate of learning development, and so accelerates learners' achievement. Willis (1996b) defines instruction:

> It (instruction) can certainly help students to notice specific features of the target language. It can give students the opportunity to process grammatical and lexical patterns, and to form hypotheses about their use and meaning. Learners are then more likely to recognize these features occurring in the input they are exposed to (p. 16).

To summarize, while "instruction" has an "indirect" effect on students learning, exposure, use, and motivation have a "direct" effect on learning. This categorization leads me to suggest that "indirect" can be equated to "desirable" and "direct" can be equated to "essential".

Section III: Solution—Task-Based Learning

In the previous section, I presented four conditions of optimum language learning as essential for students to acquire oral communication skills. However, these conditions must be met through concrete techniques in the everyday classroom. I propose that Task-Based learning (TBL) provides the four conditions of language learning, i.e. exposure, use, motivation, and instruction, in an effective manner. In this section, I will define what a task is and how the TBL framework works. Next, I will present how the TBL framework satisfies the four conditions of language learning. In addition, I will describe six types of tasks in order to provide concrete examples for the EFL classroom. Finally, I will discuss how students acquire oral communication strategies by using the TBL framework.

A. Defining a Task.

It is vital to understand what a "task" is in terms of successful Task-Based Learning. "By 'task' I mean a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve a real outcome." (Willis, 1996a, p. 53). Willis (1996b) continues, "tasks are always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal)" (p. 23). Nunan (1989) summarizes several definitions of a task by different researchers: "the task is a piece of meaning-focused work involving learners in comprehending, producing and/or interacting in the target language" (p. 11). Teachers need to consider a task as "goal-oriented" and "meaning-focused" activity and work when they design tasks for their language classes.

Here, I would like to describe two oral activities and evaluate whether both of them are real tasks, based on Willis' and Nunan's definition above:

- Activity A: Students classify "sports" into as many different groups as

possible with group members, e.g. individual sports (golf) / group sports (soccer)

- Activity B: Students survey their classmates by asking, "What is your favorite food?" or "What food do you like best?".

I contend that Activity A is a task, but activity B is not. The goal of the former activity is to classify sports into as many groups as possible. This activity requires students to discuss and explore their own ideas about sports classification with other group members. They have to negotiate meaning to reach group consensus, e.g. asking the reason, agreeing or disagreeing. On the other hand, the latter activity's goal seems to be to exchange personal information about favorite foods, but actually the real goal the teacher intended is to have students practice the language form. Moreover, they ask the target question given by the teacher not because they really want to know the answers, but because they think they have to use and practice that question form. Their speech production does not come from their desire to know. That is why this activity is form-focused, not meaning-focused. However, if students continue the conversation by using need-oriented words to learn more information, e.g. asking classmates why they like the food or how to cook, this activity becomes meaningful, i.e. a communicative task.

B. How Does the Task-Based Learning Framework Operate?

The stages in Willis's (1996b) TBL framework aim to optimize the four conditions of language learning with effective activities. The framework consists basically of three phases: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. (see Fig. 3)

1. Pre-task stage: This stage helps students prepare for their task performance. They are introduced to a topic and recall their prior-knowledge about the topic with brainstorming. Also, they have an opportunity to learn new vocabulary

related to the topic area of the task.

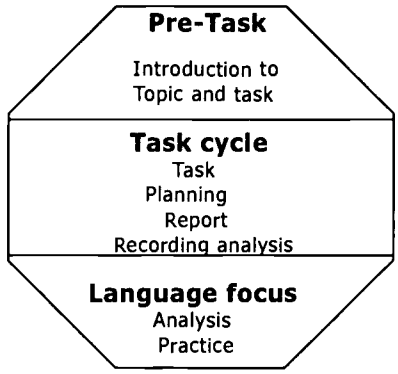


Fig.3 **The TBL framework** (adapted)

[from Jane Willis. 1996. A Framework for Task-Based Learning. p.52]

2. Task cycle: The task cycle consists of four stages. First, the task performance stage provides a rich opportunity for students to be exposed to various language features and to use the language. They negotiate meaning for the task goal in groups by using and testing freely whatever language they want to use in order to make their message understood. They also practice turn-taking and oral communication strategies to deal with their conversation in this natural setting. The teacher videotapes student task performance here for later use. Second, the planning stage offers an appropriate purpose to focus on language forms. Students explore exactly what they want to express for their oral reports. They increase collaborative learning through corrective feedback to each other or from the teacher, if they ask. Third, in the report stage, students present what they found or decided and how they performed the task. They use carefully planned and updated language in public, which is focused on both accuracy and fluency. Fourth, the recording analysis stage helps students by comparing the strategies of recorded speakers with their own strategies. They notice vocabulary and expressions that they could have used. They gain confidence by finding it easy to understand the content of recording because of

their familiarity with the task.

3. Language focus: The language focus is made up of two stages. The first stage is the language analysis stage where students identify and think about specific language structures from the text. They systematize the grammar they learned and increase their repertoire of useful lexical items. They also discover how and when to use such language features by themselves or with the teacher's guidance. The aim of the language practice stage, the second stage, is that students practice useful expressions and key vocabulary from the analysis stage and from the text they used in the previous task stage. They also build security and confidence with their learning in this stage. (Willis, 1996b)

C. How Does TBL Optimize the Four Language Learning Conditions?

The previous section discussed the four optimum language learning conditions based on SLA research. The four elements exposure, language use, motivation, and instruction, are essential for successful language learning. In this part, I will relate how TBL satisfies the four optimum language learning conditions through its sequential framework components. (See Fig. 4)

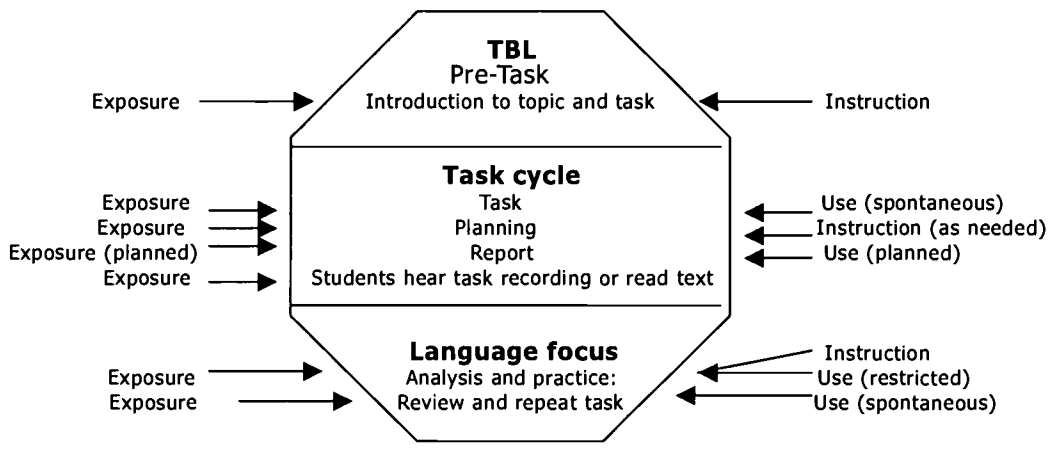


Fig.4 A diagram of TBL lesson procedure

[from Jane Willis. 1996. A Framework for Task-Based Learning. p.11]

Students have many opportunities to be exposed to real-time oral communication in every stage of the TBL framework. First, they are exposed to teacher talk in the pre-task stage where they activate their knowledge of a topic area and prepare for their task performance. In the task performance and planning stages, they experience a high quality of language exposure through group work. Learner-centered group work enhances student exposure to the target language through negotiation of meaning. This negotiation of meaning leads to a higher quality of input and a more flexible interlanguage system (Skehan, 1998). The report stage offers updated and well organized language exposure through student reports about their task outcomes. The reporters and the audience benefit from fluent and accurate language here. In the recording analysis stage, students raise their awareness of effective language use and useful strategies through audio and visual means. The exposure in the language analysis stage draws student attention to specific language features. The teacher's instruction provides good opportunities for them to focus on useful language forms and lexical patterns. After that, they are also exposed to the target language through oral practice activity in pairs or groups.

Students have many opportunites to use their own language, spontaneously and in planned ways, in the task cycle and language focus stages. Group work learning in the task performance, planning, and language practice stages encourages students to use their language spontaneously. Savignon (2001) states that coping strategies (or cooperative learning) in group work bring about rich negotiation of meaning. Bygate (1996) perceives the negotiation of meaning as follows, "students check with each other on appropriate forms of language while carrying out a given task" (p. 137). Savignon (2001) also emphasizes, "By encouraging learners to ask for information, to seek clarification, to use

circumlocution and whatever other linguistic and nonlinguistic resources they could muster to negotiate meaning and stick to the communication task at hand" (p. 16).

Also, Task-Based Learning allows students to practice their communication in a natural learning sequence which occurs from fluent language use to accurate use. Willis (1996a) emphasizes, "The Pre-task phase and Task cycle ensure a smooth and natural transition from private to more public interaction." (p. 56). (see Fig. 5)

Private use	**Public use**
in pairs or small groups	*talking to whole class*
- spontaneous	- planned
- exploratory	- rehearsed
- ephemeral	- permanent (eg recorded)
Focus on fluency and getting meanings across somehow.	Focus on fluency, accuracy, clarity and organization as befits a
Correction rarely requested or acted upon.	correction and advice welcomed.

Fig.5 Private use and Public use. [from Jane Willis. 1996. A flexible framework for task-based learning. Challenge and Change in Language Teaching. In J. Willis & D. Willis (Ed.), p.55]

Willis (1996a) describes three types of motivation during the TBL sequence: task goal, successful experience, and learner-centered learning.

> The goal of the task provides the main motivation; students generally want to achieve the task outcomes which involve them in playing the game or solving a problem. Success in completing the task is in itself a motivating factor. Then, because they have done or will do the task themselves they are keen to listen to a related recording and read the transcription or related text (p. 60)

Learner-centered lessons, especially in the TBL framework, support and accelerate student motivation for communicative learning. Eyring (2001) defines learner-centered activities as those which "provide opportunities for learning by

doing, and make learning meaningful to students" (p. 335). Learner-centered group work has two contributions for student motivation: ridding their anxiety of mistakes and risk-taking and creating the situation of active learning. The first contribution is that, in a learner-centered class, "students are more likely to experiment and take risks with new language in a supportive atmosphere" (Willis, 1996b, p. 7) without teacher interruption for error correction. Such security motivates them to speak fluently and leads to their confidence in taking risks. Call (1998) emphasizes the importance of this consideration in setting up learner-centered classes for Japanese students. The next contribution is that, according to Kamada (1991), learner-centered group work creates a "creative, active learning environment" (p. 25), helps students become more "socialized, expressive, and active" (p. 25); and moreover, fosters their independency "so that they can take responsibility for their own learning" (p. 25). He suggests that teachers should give students opportunities to experience their own decision making and choice in self-involvement situations in order to increase their intrinsic motivation. It is also important for teachers to motivate students with their positive comments on their efforts.

Teacher instruction facilitates experiential and self-awareness learning in TBL. In the pre-task stage, the teacher introduces the topic area and the task, and activates students recalling useful words/phrases. The teacher also helps students learn vital new vocabulary that is useful for their task performance. This instruction increases their sense of interest, security, and confidence with the topic and the task. Next, the teacher becomes a "language adviser" in the planning stage. The teacher helps students develop self awareness of errors, encourages collaborative learning in groups, and also gives positive advice and feedback. Moreover, in the analysis stage of the language focus, the teacher takes on the role of "facilitator".

He/she encourages students to identify and explore specific language features (which they met in the task cycle) by themselves or group members. After that, the teacher asks students about their findings or draws their attention to teacher-lead language features, and asks students to explain the reasons for their ideas. During the practice stage, the teacher continues as "facilitator", helping students systematize their known and new language with activities, and tries to end up making students feel comfortable and confident with their learning (Willis, 1996b). Brown (2001) clarifies, "teachers do not simply tell students about how language works; instead they give students opportunities to use language as they grapple with the problem-solving complexities of a variety of concrete experiences" (p. 238).

D. A Variety of Task Types Provides Rich Opportunities and Experiences.

What kinds of tasks are possible with TBL? What do students learn through the tasks? Many teachers use activities in their classroom to motivate students, but it tends to end up as just fun or focused only on grammar reinforcement. However, TBL has specific goal-oriented tasks which offer many varieties of meaning-focused learning. These tasks will provide useful and hands-on ideas for EFL teachers and be easily adapted to their language classroom and any age of students. According to Willis (1996a), "A variety of topics and range of task types will broaden their language experience, expand their vocabulary and prevent boredom" (p. 55). Tasks provide students great opportunities to learn how to learn, i.e. learning strategies: listing, ordering/sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experience, and creative work. Willis (1996b) categorizes tasks into six types in her book (p. 26-28, pp. 149-154) as follows:

1. Listing Listing tasks tend to generate a lot of talk as learners explain their ideas. The outcome is a completed list or a draft mind map. (see the Appendix, pp. 26, for an example of a mind map.)
   - Brainstorming a topic with their own knowledge and experience in pairs or groups; (Sample task) Find the words beginning with "m".
   - Finding things out by asking each other or referring to other members; (Sample task) Write out many ways of how to lose weight.
2. Ordering / Sorting These tasks involve four main processes.
   - Sequencing items, actions, or events in a logical or chronological order; (Sample task) Discuss the steps for doing a magic trick after reading/watching it, and order the steps.
   - Ranking items according to personal values or specified criteria; (Sample task) Agree on the best ways of spending summer holidays, and rank these items in order of interest / usefulness / low cost.
   - Categorizing items in given groups or grouping them under given headings; (Sample task) Talk about what they would ask if a genie were to grant one wish. Evaluate other group members' wishes according to agree /disagree /undecided and complete a chart with their information.
   - Classifying items in different ways, where the categories themselves are not given; (Sample task) Think of many/5 ways to classify the animals in the picture, e.g. meat-eat animals (tiger, lion)/plant-eat animals (horse, cow)
3. Comparing These tasks involve comparing information of a similar nature but from different sources or versions in order to identify common points and/or differences.
   - Matching to identify specific points and relate them to each other;

(Sample task) Listen to/Read several descriptions of 5 people and their belongings. Match the pictures of them with those of their belongings.

- Finding similarities and things in common; (Sample task) Compare Japan and other countries and find as many similarities as possible between them.
- Finding differences; (Sample task) Jigsaw viewing, e.g. half the class views a video clip without sound and the other half listens to the video without pictures. A sound-only person and a visual-only person in pairs talk about information they got and find the differences between their ideas. TV commercials are interesting source.

4. Problem solving These tasks make demands upon people's intellectual and reasoning powers, and, though, challenging, they are engaging and often satisfying to solve. The process includes analyzing real and hypothetical situations, reasoning and decision making. (Refer to the Appendix for a complete problem solving lessen plan.)
   - Short puzzle, logic problems.
   - Real-life problems; (Sample task) What advice would you give in response to this letter from an advice column?
   - Incomplete stories/poems; paused video recordings; guessing games; (Sample task) Work out possible story-line which might continue.
   - Case studies with full background data; (Sample task) After reading the information about a developing country, decide on 3 appropriate ways for your country to give aid to this country.
5. Sharing personal experience These tasks encourage learners to think more freely about themselves and share their experiences with others. The resulting interaction is closer to casual social conversation in that it is not so

directly goal-oriented as in other tasks. The process includes narrating, describing, exploring and expanding attitudes, opinions, and reactions.

- Anecdotes; (Sample task) Talk about terrible journeys, silly accidents.
- Personal reminiscences; (Sample task) Talk about your past regrets of doing/not doing something.
- Attitudes, opinions, preferences; (Sample task) Talk about your favorite places to go and find people with similar ones.
- Personal reactions; (Sample task) What makes you most annoyed / stressed / very happy / relaxed?

6. Creative tasks These are often called projects and involve pairs or groups of learners in some kind of freer creative work. They also tend to have more stages than other tasks, and can involve combinations of task types such as listing, ordering and sorting, comparing and problem solving. Out-of-class research is sometimes needed. Organization skills and team-work are important in getting the task done. The outcome can often be appreciated by a wider audience.

- Creative writing; (Sample task) Write a poem, short story, song and play.
- Social/historical investigations and links; (Sample task) Internet and email links with an overseas school.
- Media projects for school or local community; (Sample task) Design, produce and record a short programme on audio or video, e.g. a local news documentary or a short drama.
- Real-life rehearsals; (Sample task) Ask for directions in a country which students will visit on a school trip.

E. Acquiring Oral Communication Strategies.

The abundant exposure and use of language in the TBL framework help students acquire and develop oral communication strategies. Students always have difficulty communicating in English despite their language knowledge because they are not used to making the best use of their ability under great pressure during real-time interaction. Lazaraton (2001) explains the difficulty of on-going oral communication. The speaker has to deal with the next process simultaneously: "monitoring and understanding the other speakers, thinking about one's own contribution, producing that contribution, monitoring its effect, and so on" (p. 103). Communication strategies are useful for students to handle their real-time conversation and to solve their problems during face-to-face interaction. According to Rost (1996), "In 'real time', the learner must utilize knowledge strategically in order to maximize available memory resources and the learner must solve problems as they emerged" (p. 42). He suggests that learners should acquire three oral communicative strategies. The first strategy is the "message strategy" which assists listening comprehension, e.g. by clarifying unfamiliar words, asking questions about ideas of the speaker, and rephrasing what the person heard. The second strategy is the "response strategy", which is very useful for showing the emotion of the learner to the speaker by expressing an opinion, agreeing or disagreeing, and expressing an open and clear reaction. The "Initiation strategy", the third strategy, works effectively when the learner is speaking his/her ideas; changing the topic, introducing new information, and making sure listeners understand.

Rost (1996) introduced these three strategies to his classroom and helped students observe and recognize them through their own experience with four steps: contextualization, observation, demonstration, and retry. Here, I propose

that the TBL framework can provide students with ideal situations for the three communication strategies which Rost (1996) presents. Students prepare for a task in pre-task stage, and work on the task (i.e. contextualization), where their performance is videotaped. After the planning and report stages are over, they watch their own or another class task performance in the recording stage (i.e. observation), taking notes of their findings. The teacher draws student attention to the inappropriate strategies that the speakers and the listeners used in the recording. For example, "I ask the students what went wrong.was it a problem of 'controlling' the message", 'responding', and 'initiating'?" (Rost, 1996, p. 43), and "students identify the strategy choices the speaker or listener made" (Rost, 1996, p. 43). Next, through group discussion in the language analysis stage, they analyze what strategies were more appropriate at that moment and explore how and when they can use the strategies in the context (i.e. analysis instead of demonstration). Finally, at language practice stage, they try the same type of a task again (i.e. retry), "thinking about their choices for 'message,' 'response,' and 'initiation'" (Rost, 1996, p. 43). Thus, TBL provides excellent communication strategy learning through its natural oral communication setting.

Section IV: Conclusion

In this paper, I reflected on the situation in my oral communication classroom and analyzed the current problems of my class. I also discussed four conditions of optimum language learning from the view of SLA, and explored how to apply the four conditions to the Task-Based Learning framework. Next, I described six types of tasks in order to provide EFL teachers with concrete examples of tasks for classroom application. Moreover, I clarified how students can acquire and develop communication strategies in the TBL framework sequence.

How will TBL change my oral communication class? I am interested in both student response and that of other English teachers. Students will immediately feel how satisfying it is to communicate in English. In the TBL framework procedure, they will be free to use and test whatever they know and want to try. Goal-oriented tasks will motivate them to be active learners and encourage them to be willing to take risks. In a traditional teaching class, students always felt uncomfortable, nervous, and insecure when they had to find specific answers which the teacher already knew. However, task outcomes are always correct answers. In the TBL concept, the most important feature is not to reach only one answer, but to find original, different, and unique answers. Therefore, meaningful and communicative interaction happens through negotiation of meaning. This concept means that all the answers or ideas of students are respected, and teaches us that "what is different is wonderful". As a result, students feel satisfied with their efforts and gain confidence; moreover, they may want to experience more success, thereby creating a "success cycle".

How will other teachers respond to TBL instruction? Teachers, including me, have stuck to a traditional teaching style which is primarily form-focused and related to memorization methods because of several reasons, e.g. teaching English

for the college entrance examination. Actually, many teachers who use these methods are tired of their teaching style because they can not motivate students. If they observe the TBL instruction, how will they react? They might be curious about the TBL approach which enriches student communicative interaction. I would like to suggest that we teachers can simply change the teaching style by turning our traditional procedures upside down. That is, we can proceed from "teach them first, and then let them do" to "let them do first, and teach about it later". When students experience tasks first, they discover what they know and do not know, i.e. they contextualize new language through their own experience, not through teacher instruction. This leads to creating a purpose and motivation for learning the new language they did not know.

Many teachers think that it is impossible to teach communicative English and examination-oriented English at the same time. They insist that those types of English are different, and so they can not teach both. As a result, they tend to emphasize accuracy-centered English without teaching fluency-centered communication. I also shared this idea. However, I now believe that these two "Englishes" are the same. The key to success in learning English is how well we can communicate meaning, not how much information we can recall for a test. Teachers need to help students improve not only accuracy but also true communicative abilities. I contend that teachers can teach "both Englishes" in the natural learning sequence of the TBL framework.

Appendix

Lesson Plan: Focus on Oral Communication

1. Lesson Objectives:

(1) Language Function: (a) Sequential time markers (enumerative, additive)

First, second, third, and then, also, before, after

(b) Suggested language; *Let's, how about, why not, why don't you*

(2) Grammatical Structure: Subordinative Conjunction; *because, if*

(3) Cultural Aspect: To learn about the geography and places of interest in San Francisco

2. Context of the Lesson

<Pre-task> Student every day life. After the teacher talks about his trip to San Francisco, students talk about their own travel experiences.

<Task cycle> Students' outside world. They discuss and decide an original trip itinerary.

<Language focus> After practicing the target expressions, students try to plan a one-day tour in their hometown, using what they have learned in this lesson.

3. Pre-task

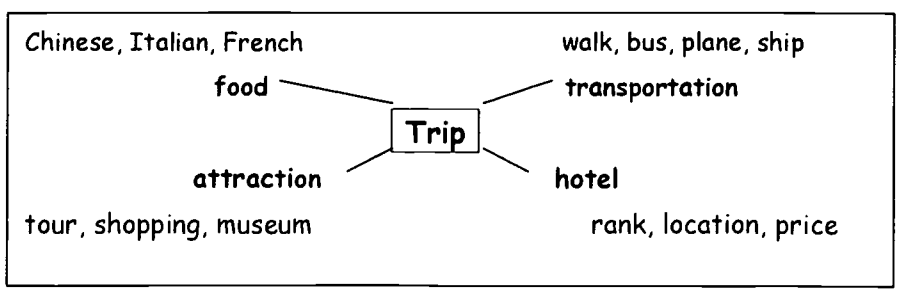
(1) Get ss' attention: Show and tell about some pictures of the teacher's trip experience, and ask them what they know about San Francisco.

(2) Personalization: Have each pair share memories of their trip experiences.

(3) Schema activation: Have ss brainstorm the general activities of a trip.

e.g. In a trip, what kinds of things do we experience

(4) Idea map: Write ss' ideas on the board and categorize them with clusters.



(5) Overview: Introduce to ss what they will do today in Task cycle (task, planning, report) and Language focus stages.

(6) Grouping: Get ss to make groups of four, and distribute handout #1.#10 (#1, San Francisco city map/ #2.#6, Attractions / #7, Transport /#8, #9, Restaurants / #10, Tour schedule sample, Group original schedule form). After this, preview the handouts.

(7) Task introduction: Introduce ss what they will do: "you will plan a one-day trip to San Francisco as a travel agency. You are to do three things. First, make your original travel agent name. Second, remember that your tour starts at 9 a.m. from your hotel, 'King George' and has 1 hour free lunch time and dinner at 7 p.m. Third, in your group, decide 3 attractions, types of transportation, and a restaurant for dinner. Each attraction takes 3 hours, including the time to get a sight seeing place. You need to discuss in English, but if you can't, you can say Japanese words."

(8) Role in group: Get ss to decide each role in the group of four, and explain each role: leaders organize group discussion, writers record what they talked about, reporters prepare for group report after discussion. Distribute handout #11 (Language Checkers' Sheet) to language checkers and tell them to keep no Japanese situation and record who talk how many times and what expressions are hard to say in English in their group.

4. Task cycle

(1) Task: Ss read the information of some attractions, discuss in English, and decide what attractions, transportation, and restaurant are to be put in their tour. (Teacher monitors their activity and answers their questions, if any.)

(2) Planning: Distribute handout #12 (Report Planning Sheet), and make ss sure of the following notice. (a) All members together organize their report so that the audience can understand the report well. (b) Each reporter rehearses their group report in the group. (c) The reporter can use their notes, but should try to look up and talk to the audience.

(Teacher circulates around the class, offers suggestions, and answers ss' questions.)

(3) Report and Listening:

1. Report situation setting: Distribute handout #13 (Evaluation sheet)and explain that they must listen carefully to each reporter. And tell them to jot down information on handout #13 and evaluate classmates' report.
2. Report: Each reporter reports the plan of their group in English.
3. Video: Videotape the performance of each reporter for self evaluation.

(Teacher ends up report session with a positive note for their effort.)

(4) Observation of a recording: Students watch a recording of other class students' doing the same task.

1. Direction: Tell ss to write out on their notes what they notice, what they want to know more, and what strategies they used or could have used. e.g. new vocabulary, new expressions, the language they could have used.
2. During observing: Students compare the way of their task performance with that of people in the recording.
3. Discussion: Get ss to discuss their observation with their notes in groups.

(Teacher encourages them to use what they learned actively later.)

5. Language focus

(1) Elicit: Ask a writer of 3 groups to write 1 sentence including "because, if, though, before, etc", ask another 3 writers to write 1 sentence including "then, moreover, in addition, etc", and ask another 3 writers to write 1 sentence including "Let's, why not, how about, etc." Draw the chart like this;

because, if	and then, also, next First, second, third, finally	Let's, why not how about

(2) Similarity, paraphrase: Ask ss if they know similar expressions to the parts the teacher underlined, and ask them to paraphrase the underlined parts.

e.g. I want to go to Golden Gate Park because it is beautiful.

I want to go to Golden Gate Park because of its beauty.

(3) Target function and grammar: Introduce the target expressions with students' sentences on the board simply and clearly.

(4) Note: Get ss to write out the sentences on the board on their own notes. Also encourage them to write out whatever language they learned on their notes.

(5) Vocabulary: Ask language checkers to write out on the board what expressions are hard to say in English, and talk about them with ss.

(6) Self practice: Get ss to practice these target expressions and new vocabulary orally, using the schedules of other groups on the handout #13.

(7) Pair practice: Tell ss to plan a one-day tour in their hometown and explain to their partner with their drawing map. Encourage them to use the expressions they learned in this class with their notes.

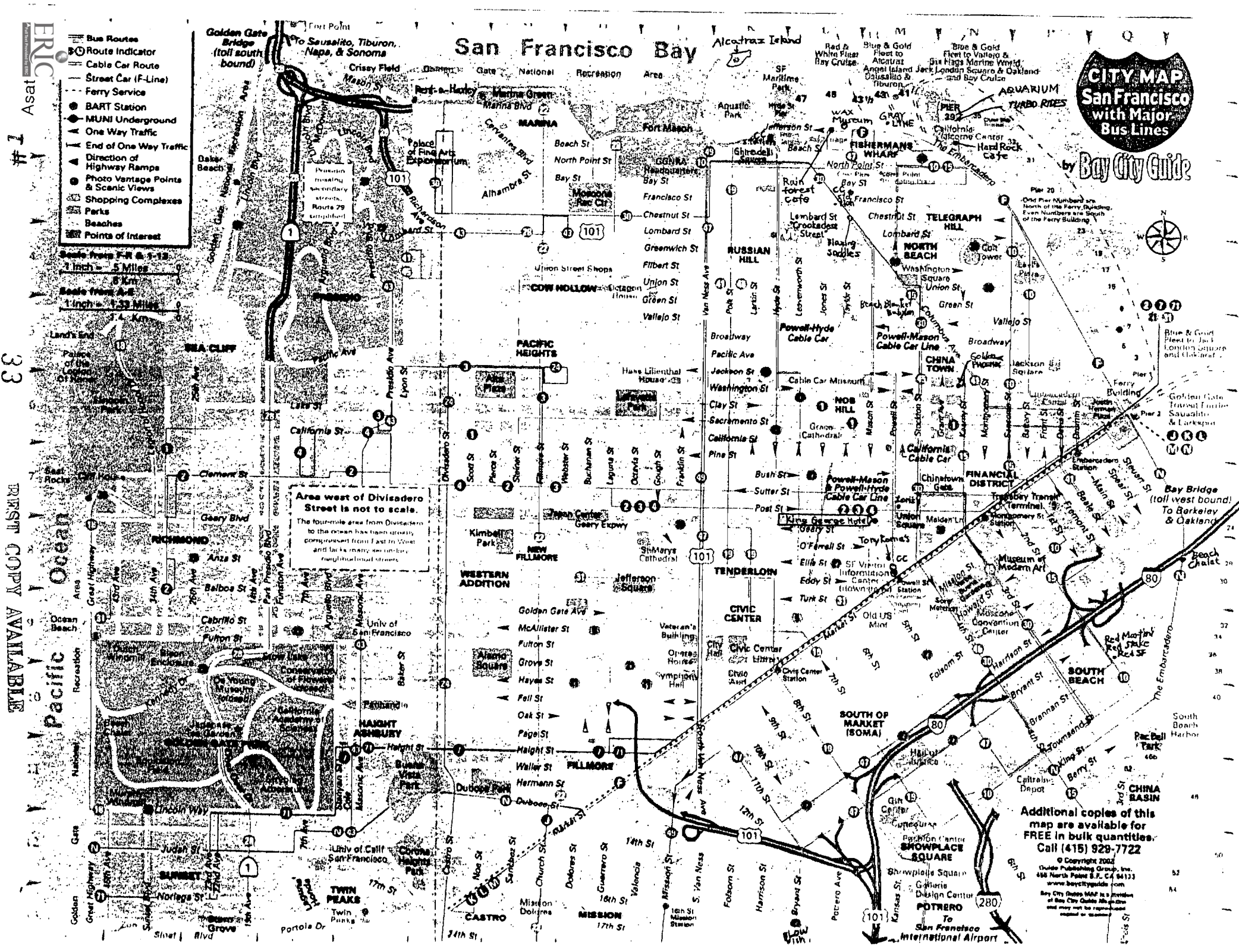
(8) Feedback: Collect and distribute peer and teacher's evaluation sheet to each group leader. The group can read the comments on the sheet.

(9) Feedback session: Ask ss how they felt and what they learned through today's class.

(10) Assignment: Tell them to go to self-access lab and record their one-day hometown tour on a tape, using the expressions that they learned today, and also tell the reporters to watch their reporting performance on VCR at home and write their comments about it. (Handout #14. Self-Evaluation for My Report).

Notes:

- In the next class, teacher gives a feedback sheet to each reporter.
- Teacher collects handout #14 from the reporters, give some positive comments on it, and returns it to them. Teacher keeps their work on his/her note



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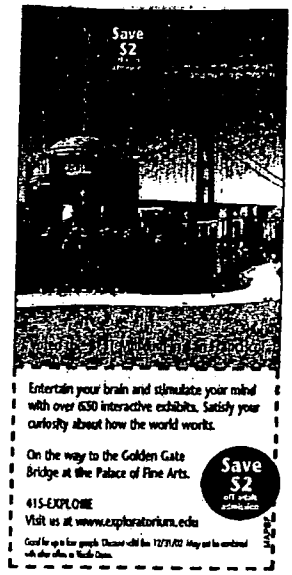
(2) **GOLDEN GATE PARK BAND** *Music Concourse, Golden Gate Park, 510-530-0814.* Since 1882, the Golden Gate Park Band has performed regularly in the park. Pack a picnic and enjoy this perennial pleasure. Su 1-3pm.

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES *Includes Steinhart Aquarium, Morrison Planetarium and the Natural History Museum, Golden Gate Park, 415-750-7145 (24-hour recording), www.calacademy.org.* One of the largest natural history museums in the world offers a world of adventure. Enjoy the antics of black-footed penguins, get lost in the azure waters of the Fish Roundabout or go on safari in the African Hall. Open daily 10am-5pm. Admission $8.50 adults, $5.50 ages 12-17 and seniors (age 65 and over), $2 ages 4-11, free age 3 and under. First W of the month free. CityPass ticket booklet includes tickets to four famous museums, a San Francisco Bay cruise and use of cable cars and Muni transportation for one packaged price of $33.25.

One of the world's largest urban parks is Golden Gate Park. The Japanese Tea Garden, with its well maintained pathsand shrubbery, ornamental gates and lanterns and carp-filled pool, creates an oasis setting. The California Academy of Sciences and its museum, aquarium and planetarium exhibits run the gamut of natural science. The National AIDS Memorial Grove offers a quiet retreat and Strybing Arboretum's living museum of more than 6,000 plants is a green thumb's delight.

Cycling and Rollerblading are popular pastime in the park, but like any true urban oasis, there's a myriad of other sporting activities ranging from archery to model boat racing, golf to fly-fishing. Editor's note: Both the de Young and Asian Art museums are now closed.



(3) **EXPLORATORIUM – MUSEUM OF SCIENCE, ART AND HUMAN PERCEPTION** *Palace of Fine Arts, 3601 Lyon St., 415-563-7337 (general information), 415-561-0360 (tape), 415-561-0362(Tactile Dome), www.exploratorium.edu.* Entertain the brain with more than 650 hands-on exhibits. Voted "Best Museum and Best Family Outing in San Francisco." Winter (Labor Day to Memorial Day) Tu-Su 10am-5pm, W until 9pm. Closed M (except most holidays). Summer (Memorial Day to Labor Day) daily 10am-6pm, W until 9pm. Admission $9 adults, $7 university students and seniors, $5 disabled and ages 6-17, $2.50 ages 3-5, free under age 3. Tactile Dome $12, includes museum admission and requires reservations. CityPass ticket booklet includes tickets to four famous museums, a San Francisco Bay cruise and use of cable cars and Muni transportation for one packaged price of $33.25. Upcoming exhibits include:

THROUGH MAY 5 "MATHEMATICA: A WORLD OF NUMBERS AND BEYOND." A centerpiece that explores mathematics as a tool, a science and a work of art that was designed by Charles and Ray Eames.

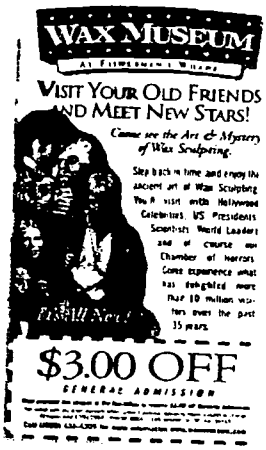
JUNE 25-JAN 31, 2003 "THE INTERACTION OF PHYSIOLOGY AND CULTURE." More than 70 exhibits on how we see, interpret and how culture and environment have an influence on defining our visual world.

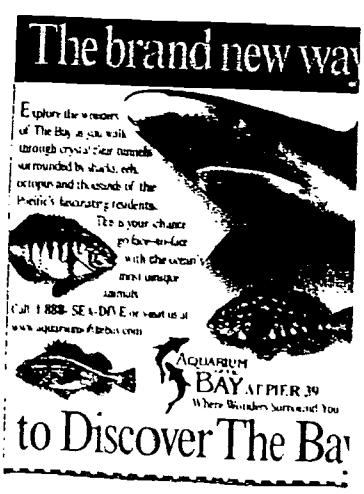
OCT. 2002 "NEW LIVING LABORATORY." More than 35 stand-alone exhibits that explore the traits of life. Observe cells through a microscope, watch live plant and animal sperm and find out about the origin of oxygen on the earth.

Photo by Phil Coblentz

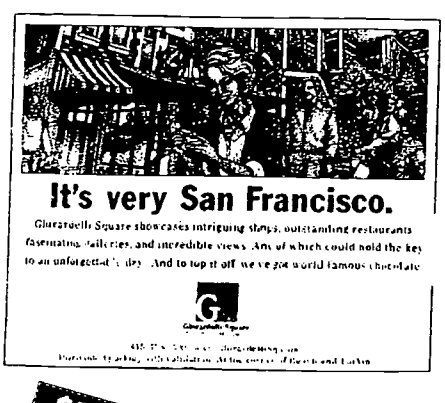
The entrance to Chinatown at Grant Avenue and Bush Street is called the "Dragon's Gate." Inside are 24 blocks of hustle and bustle, most of it taking place along Grant Avenue, the oldest street in San Francisco. This city within a city is best explored on foot; exotic shops, renowned restaurants, food markets, temples and small museums comprise its boundaries. Visitors can buy ancient potions from herb shops, relax and enjoy a "dim sum" lunch or witness the making of fortune cookies.

(5) **WAX MUSEUM ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX** *145 Jefferson St., 800-439-4305, 415-202-0400, www.waxmuseum.com.* After three years of careful planning and research, a new $15 million Wax Museum at Fisherman's Wharf Entertainment Complex opened last summer. The grand opening of the new 100,000-square-foot complex introduced a galaxy of new "stars" in the bigger and better-than-ever museum as well as all new retail, restaurant and other state-of-the-art entertainment.





(6) **AQUARIUM OF THE BAY** *Pier 39, The Embarcadero at Beach St., 415-623-5300, www.aquariumofthebay.com, info@aquariumofthebay.com.* Explore the marine secrets of the San Francisco Bay while walking through 300 feet of crystal-clear tunnels. Replicating an authentic underwater dive, the Aquarium of the Bay experience takes visitors within inches of thousands of marine animals indigenous to San Francisco Bay. Summer daily 9am-8pm, winter daily 10am-5pm, hours subject to change. Admission $7.95 seniors (age 61 and over) $6.50 ages 3-12 and under.

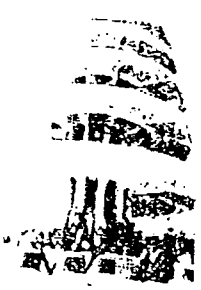


(7) **GHIRARDELLI SQUARE** *Ghirardelli Square Management Office, 900 North Point St., Suite 100 (Fisherman's Wharf), 415-775-5500, www.ghirardellisq.com, ghsmail@aol.com.* Most famous for its years as a chocolate factory from 1852 until the 1960s. In 1964 Ghirardelli Square became the country's first manufacturing complex renovated into a festival marketplace. In addition to fabulous views of the bay, landscaped gardens and self-guided historic walking tour, it boasts more than 50 shops and award-winning restaurants.

(8) **TURBO RIDE – PIER 39** *Pier 39, Space M-1 (Fisherman's Wharf), 415-392-8872.* Breathtaking, high-tech ride simulation adventures that look and feel so real that visitors will quickly discover why seatbelts are positively required. Open daily 10:30am-10pm through summer. Admission $8.95 seniors and children.

(9) **JAPAN CENTER** *Post and Buchanan Sts. (bounded by Laguna, Geary, Fillmore and Post Sts.) (Japantown) 415-931-5829, www.sfjapantown.citysearch.com.* Focal point of much of The City's Japanese cultural and business life and the site of several festivals. In addition to a three-block shopping arcade, the center also houses restaurants, galleries, a bookstore and movie theaters along with a deluxe hotel and Japanese bath/shiatsu massage center. The complex is easy to reach by public transportation or car. Parking is available in the first level garage.

CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL *Japantown, 415 563 2313.* Two consecutive weekends of performances, crafts, food, martial arts exhibitions. Parade will be held April 21 at 12:30pm at the Civic Center.



Taunderers taiko drums reverberate throughout the Japan Center during summer and spring festivals.

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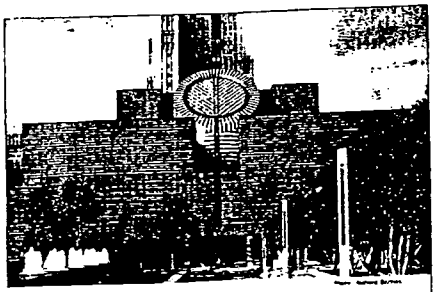

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(c)

The advent of Pacific Bell Park has rekindled San Francisco's affection for one of America's oldest pastimes. Robb Nen from the Florida here

BASEBALL ? (D=

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS *Pacific Bell Park, 24 Willie Mays Plaza, 415-972-2400, www.sfgiants.com, giants@sfgiants.com.* Opened in April 2000, Pacific Bell Park is the new home of the San Francisco Giants baseball team. Located on The City's scenic waterfront, the ballpark is a short walk from downtown San Francisco and Moscone Center and is accessible by every means of public transit. Tours daily 10am-2pm.

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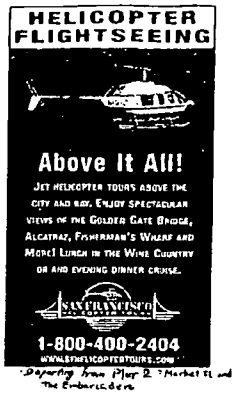
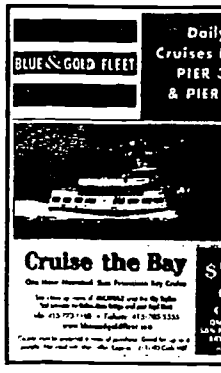
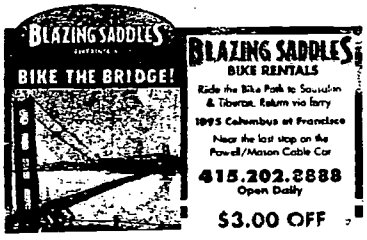
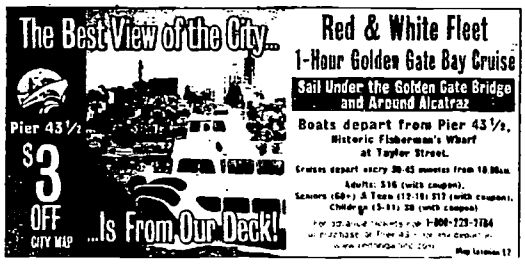


Departing from Pier 2, Market St. and The Embarcadero







At 44th St. – Powell St.

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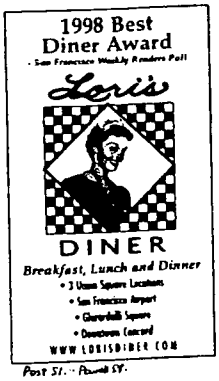

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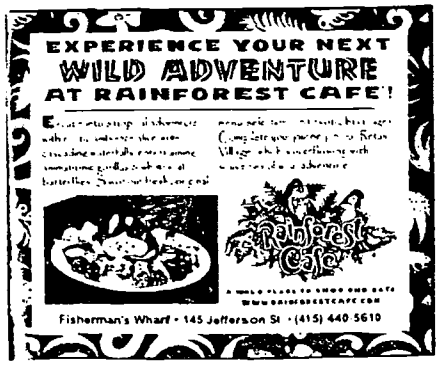

10

Sample Tour Agent Name: ***SF Spectacle Tour***

	attraction	transport	information
9:00 a.m.	Chinatown	Walking	" Dragon's Gate" Grant Avenue ···· shopping
12:00 p.m.	Free Lunch Time		
1:00	Golden Gate Park	Bike	GG park band California academy of science Japanese Tea Garden
4:00	Golden Gate Bridge → Sausalito	Bike & Ferry	Drive through GG Bridge beautiful Island Sausalito Enjoy cruising
7:00	Dinner at Lori's	Cable Car	The most famous
8:00 p.m.	Hotel	Walking	

Tour Agent Name:

	attraction	transport	information
9:00 a.m.			
12:00 p.m.			
1:00			
4:00			
7:00			
8:00 p.m.			

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#11

Language Checkers' Sheet

1. What expressions were hard to say in English? What kind of Japanese words did your group members use to express his/her ideas?

(You can write in Japanese)

English	Japanese

Who talked how many times?

Your group members name

(Example) Moriatsu				
5				

#12

Report Planning

Follow the 4 As (4 aids) for successful report!!

1. (Attention) Tell your group's name and greet with a smile.

2. (Attract) Show each picture of attractions in your plan on OHP

3. (Amuse) Explain the schedule in detail, pointing at the map.

4. (Appeal) Impress the audience with your sales points.

"NOTE" Look up and speak aloud!!

Memo

#13

San Francisco 1 Day Tour

(Evaluation Sheet)

Tour Agent Name _____

	Attraction	Transport	Information
9:00 a.m.			
12:00 p.m.	Free Lunch Time		
1:00			
4:00			
7:00			
8:00 p.m.	Hotel		

Your Comment

What do you think about the 1 day tour of this agent?

Write your comment on this agent positively !

#14

Self-Evaluation for My Report

Evaluate yourself;

(A… very good / B… good / C… so so / D… not good)

1. Did I draw audience attention at the beginning? (A B C D)
2. Did I speak aloud? (A B C D)
3. Did I try to look up at the audience? (A B C D)
4. Did I get try to attract the audience? (A B C D)
5. Did I use visual aids effectively? (A B C D)
6. Did I explain the group report well? (A B C D)
7. Did I appeal to the audience at the end? (A B C D)
8. Did I enjoy my report? (A B C D)

After watching your report, how do you feel? Write about good points and parts you want to improve in the next report.

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